

The Proficiency, Instructional and Affective Domains of Long Term English Language Learners: A Review of the Research

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Abstract

The population of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the United States, in the K-12 context, is diverse and comprised of lesser-known subordinate groups including Long-term English Language Learners (LTELLs). The LTELL designation refers to students who, after attending schools for six or more years, still require English as a New Language (ENL) support services (Olsen, 2010b). These students are known to have stalled academic proficiency, and remain in protracted ELL status, unable to master the content necessary to pass the state mandated benchmark English language proficiency tests. There is a small but growing body of literature that addresses LTELL students' academic and social characteristics (e.g. Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Olsen, 2010b). The current review seeks to add to the extant body of knowledge on LTELLs by classifying, synthesizing and evaluating previous scholarship on this population. This review is undergirded by the following research questions: (RQ1) What are the proficiency factors of LTELLs? To what extent do these proficiency factors affect language and literacy development? (RQ2) What are the instructional factors and intervention practices which affect LTELLs? To what extent do these instructional factors impact LTELLs literacy and language development? (RQ3) What are the affective factors which affect performance for LTELLs? To what extent do these affective factors impact LTELLs literacy and language development?

Keywords: English language learners, long-term English language learners, bilingualism, language proficiency

Introduction

English Language Learners (ELLs) [1] are a diverse and rapidly growing student population in the United States K-12 context. Most ELLs are first generation immigrants who are born in the United States and speak Spanish as their first language (Sanchez, 2017). Despite some homogeneous characteristics, ELLs linguistically represent over 150 different languages (Baird, 2015). Recent estimates from census data suggest that ELLs are the fastest growing student population in the nation, accounting for over 10% of the total public school population

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Despite the large number of ELL students and the dramatic rise in their school enrollment, schools have struggled to adopt clear and coherent language policies and programs to support ELLs. This lack of systematicity has left schools and educators with the task of designing ad hoc support services for ELLs (Bailey & Kelley, 2013). As a result, many schools and educators have used a monolithic approach for instruction and academic support services for the ELL population. The diversity of ELLs is reflected in the many subgroups [2] of the population, which is comprised of lesser-known subordinate groups including Long-term English Language Learners (LTELLs) [3].

The LTELL designation [4] refers to students who, after attending schools for six or more years [5] in the United States, still require English as a New Language (ENL) support services (Olsen, 2010b). This six-year cut off mark is drawn from early second language acquisition research which suggests that a second language requires six years to learn (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1984).

There is a small but growing body of literature that addresses LTELL students' academic and social characteristics (e.g. Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Menken, Kleyn & Chae, 2012; Olsen, 2010b, 2012). The current review seeks to add to the extant body of knowledge on LTELLs by classifying, synthesizing and evaluating previous scholarship on this population. For the present review, I will draw upon select components of Turner and Purpura's (2015) Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA) framework as a way to organize scholarship and better understand the learning processes of LTELLs. The LOA framework features seven interrelated dimensions of learning: context, elicitation, proficiency, learning, instruction, interaction, and effectiveness. These dimensions interact across different classroom agents: the teacher, learner, and peers. According to Turner and Purpura (2015), this working framework and approach is drawn from assessment research and assumes that learning is a "highly individual cognitive process that is situated within collaborative settings that depend on the participatory practices of interaction to exchange meanings and develop joint competencies" (p. 261). Given the limited scope of the present review, I have chosen to focus on three dimensions of LOA that are central to the learning processes of LTELL students: the proficiency, instructional and affective dimensions. These dimensions are integral to the learning process as they provide insight into a learner's knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) within a domain. This review is undergirded by the following research questions:

(RQ1) What are the proficiency factors of LTELLs? To what extent do these proficiency factors affect language and literacy development?

(RQ2) What are the instructional factors and intervention practices which affect LTELLs? To what extent do these instructional factors impact LTELLs literacy and language development?

(RQ3) What are the affective factors which affect performance for LTELLs? To what extent do these affective factors impact LTELLs literacy and language development?

Proficiency Dimension of LTELLs

The present section will review and critique what has been reported in the literature for the LOA proficiency dimension of LTELLs. The LOA proficiency dimension is foundational to three central components of K-12 education: curriculum, instruction and assessment. This dimension undergirds these core elements as the learner and teacher interpret, understand and apply these components, furthering or inhibiting learner success in language proficiency and

literacy [6]. This section begins with a description of the development of proficiency exams for ELLs, and then reviews seminal classification studies, illustrating how an ELL becomes a LTELL. The section then details LTELL proficiency scholarship.

Measures of language proficiency: Identification and classification of ELL status

The primary measure which determines an ELL's language proficiency, and if a learner exits ELL status, is state English language proficiency (ELP) exams. These language proficiency exams were developed after the federal government mandated annual standardized tests for ELLs in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). The NCLB Act was a turning point in language testing for ELLs in that it created guidelines for ELL assessments policies and procedures, mandating that ELLs be tested annually with state ELP exams. The NCLB Act also mandated that labels be given for each level of ELP, including descriptions of level defining characteristics and an assessment score that determines attainment for each level (NCLB, 2002). Prior to these federal regulations, states and districts used a variety of idiosyncratic policies and tests to determine language proficiency levels for ELLs, creating a lack of coherence in language testing policies and procedures. This variability among assessments and procedures made comparing data and drawing meaningful conclusions problematic. These inconsistencies in testing procedures created difficult research conditions; thus, there are no known studies prior to NCLB which examine the impact of classification status and subsequent ELP performance [7].

Progress was made in test design as a result of NCLB mandates. Post NCLB, ELP tests shared common characteristics and were based on state ELP standards designed to assess the requisite English language necessary to understand academic content in four domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing (National Research Council, 2011). As a result of NCLB mandates, ELP tests more accurately measured students' level of ELP. This was an important step forward in the assessment of ELLs as these tests are critical measures of ELP and the results are used in high-stakes decisions which determine programming, instruction and curriculum [8].

Expected time of attainment to English language proficiency

While there are no classification studies for ELLs in the K-12 context prior to NCLB, there are studies which investigate the time it takes for an ELL to acquire native like ELP for academic purposes. These works by Cummins (1981) and Collier (1987) provide insight into the expected time of attainment for ELLs and for how an ELL becomes a LTELL student. Cummins (1981) early non-experimental research suggests that it takes between 5 -7 years for an ELL to acquire native like ELP for academic purposes. This study was based on analyses of large data sets from over 1200 immigrant students in Canada in grades 5, 7 and 9. This work is a substantial contribution to the field in that it was the first large scale empirical study to suggest a timeline for ELLs to acquire proficiency for academic purposes.

Later research conducted in varied K-12 contexts in the United States by Collier (1987, 1989) and Hakuta, Butler, and Witt (2000), both confirmed and extended Cummins' findings by illustrating the importance of students' prior levels of education and age upon enrollment in English as a second language (ESL). For example, Collier's (1987) study suggests that students' age and level of language proficiency in the native and target language at the time of entering into an ESL program are critical variables which can determine the amount of time spent to attain ELP. Collier's (1987) research shows that older students who initially entered

ESL between the ages of 12 – 15 had the greatest difficulty in attaining ELP for academic purposes. This finding has also been reported in more recent LTELL studies by Olsen (2010a) and Kieffer (2016) which show a correlation between initial ELL classification in secondary school and an increased probability of later LTELL classification. Other scholars such as Kim and Herman (2012) and Kieffer (2016) have suggested conversely, that younger students between the ages of 8-11, have the least difficulty in attainment of ELP for academic purposes. These works show that students' age and prior levels of language proficiency and education are critical variables in subsequent ELL classification.

Proficiency classification: subsequent ELP success and protracted status

These seminal early studies on time of attainment to achieve ELP provided a basis for later ELL classification studies by Parrish et al. (2006), Kim (2011), Kim and Herman (2012), and Kieffer (2) which investigated the time it takes to exit ELL status and examined how classification is linked to ELP success. These classification studies provided an in-depth and nuanced look into the impact of ELL classification on subsequent ELP success. Parrish et al.'s (2006) study used survival analysis techniques over a period of five years to examine data from California, the state with the largest population of ELLs and LTELLs in the nation (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

Parrish et al.'s findings show that an estimated 75% of ELLs in all of California remain in ELL status after five years of entering as an ELL and that there is less than a 40% probability an ELL will be reclassified as a non-ELL after ten years of ELL status. These findings reveal that there is a significant gap between the expected and actual time to proficiency for LTELLs. Parrish et al.'s work suggests that when a student remains in ELL status they often do not make expected progress in ELP. This lack of expected progress leads to negative consequences and protracted status for ELLs as they are remediated into segregated academic program tracks. As an unintended consequence of remediation, the course segregation reduces access to the necessary content to acquire ELP and develop grade level content understandings. Course segregation then diminishes ELL's chances to be exposed to and engage with the more advanced coursework which are requisite for postsecondary educational opportunities. Thus, the unintended consequence of remediation further exacerbates the problem for LTELLs and often increases the achievement gap for this vulnerable subgroup. These remarkable findings suggest that protracted status can be detrimental to ELP success. Parrish et al.'s research findings raise serious questions as to why ELL students are not attaining proficiency within the expected timeline and calls for interventions which support more rapid and robust progress to proficiency for ELLs.

Impact of ELP classification at the state level

Kim (2011) and Kim and Herman's (2012) classification studies had similar findings to Parrish et al.'s (2006) research. Kim's research suggests that the classification patterns and status for an ELL student have an impact on subsequent ELP success. These works are important contributions to the field as very few studies have examined the relationship between annual proficiency test results, classification patterns and subsequent academic achievement for ELLs at the state level. The study's purpose was to investigate how ELP classification is linked to later ELP success and academic performance. The reports are based on both quantitative data from extant state descriptive statistics and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews of administrators and coordinators of ELL programs across 38 districts in grades 3-8. The reports'

findings suggest that ELLs who are reclassified as Former ELLs are able to catch up with the non-ELL peers over time. Generally, once an ELL exits ELL status, they no longer receive or are entitled to ESL services. They are placed in mainstream English Language Arts classes which focus primarily on content area learning. According to Kim and Herman (2012) there is “no evidence of former ELLs falling behind after classification, either relative to their non-ELL peers or in terms of absolute proficiency levels” (p. 24). This finding demonstrates the academic benefits of exiting ELL status in terms of reaching grade level proficiency and for the potential disadvantages of protracted LTELL status.

Impact of ELP classification at the local level

More recently, Kieffer (2016) studied the classification pattern of ELLs in New York City public schools. Kieffer’s report is valuable in that it offers a coherent picture of the patterns and impact of ELL classification including protracted status of LTELLs at the city level. New York City has the second highest concentration of ELLs in the nation, slightly behind Los Angeles (Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015) and Kieffer’s report offers valuable data on the emergent patterns of ELL classification in New York City public schools. Kieffer’s research used longitudinal administrative data for seven cohorts of students examining their characteristics over a period of two to nine years. His work confirmed previous research from Collier (1989) that showed the time it takes to exit ELL status is related to students’ prior level of education and that late classification of an ELL in later grades can often lead to tracking, protracted LTELL status and limited educational opportunities for academic success (Callahan, 2005; Cook, Boals, & Lundberg, 2011; Thompson, 2017). Kieffer’s (2016) research suggests that the median time to reclassification increased when a student entered into as an ELL in the 6th or 7th grade rather than in kindergarten; late classification places students at heightened risk for failure in ELP as they then need more supports. This finding is similar to Kim (2011), Kim and Herman (2012) who have noted that late classification creates a sidelining effect for students as they are marginalized from the curriculum needed to gain ELP, thereby increasing the likelihood of dropping out of school (Callahan, 2013; Menken & Klyen, 2010). Discussions on LTELL students often preclude mentioning how this subgroup attained protracted status and instead focus on LTELL’s current levels of proficiency. As the studies discussed in this section have shown, classification plays an integral role in programming decisions for ELLs, and can influence subsequent ELP and later success in schooling. While classification practices are not the sole cause for LTELL’s low level of ELP, they are influential in subsequent performance and should not be overlooked.

The studies presented in this section offer valuable perspective on classification practices at the state and city level. More research in other states and cities with large populations of ELLs and LTELLs are warranted. This would enable researchers and practitioners to begin to understand patterns across states and potentially offer insight to productive ways educators and schools can better support students in avoiding protracted LTELL status. The previous section examined how classification patterns are linked to LTELL students’ ELP success. The next section will provide an overview of the literature on common proficiency characteristics for LTELL students.

Common Proficiency Characteristics of LTELL Students

Like other subgroups of ELLs, LTELLs are a heterogeneous group with a variety of distinct strengths and areas in need of development. Despite this variety, they do share common proficiency characteristics including underdeveloped academic performance and overall academic deficits compared to their grade level ELL and non-ELL peers (Brooks, 2015; Flores, Kleyn & Menken, 2015). As a result of this poor academic performance and minimal gains on mandated annual state tests, these students retain protracted ELL status as they are unable to meet state English language proficiency benchmarks (Olsen, 2012). This stalled ELL status inhibits academic and language proficiency and is known to lead to obstacles and negative educational trajectories in schooling (Callahan, 2005; Valdéz, 2000). The proficiency scholarship on LTELLs can be categorized into three categories reviewed below: educator guides, policy guides, and scholarship positioning LTELLs as emergent bilinguals.

Early LTELL proficiency scholarship: Educator guides

The earliest scholarship on the proficiency characteristics of LTELLs was published in educator guides from Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) and Freeman and Freeman (2002). These works had similar purposes, organizing principles, and drew upon similar data sources. Both were designed as practical guides for teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders who sought to advocate and create programs and curricula for LTELLs. Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) and Freeman and Freeman's (2002) works were based on survey and interview data collected in California school districts with large populations of LTELLs. Both works include student and teacher case studies which illustrate some of the common characteristics and experiences of schooling for LTELLs. From these interviews, the authors derive and suggest activities for curricula that will support LTELLs. These texts were important contributions to the nascent field of scholarship on LTELLs as they extended the knowledge of ELL subgroups and offered practical solutions which were based on the emic perspectives of teachers of LTELLs, and the students themselves. Olsen and Jaramillo's (1999) work was also influential in that they were the first scholars to provide a formal definition for LTELL label, defining LTELLs as English Learners who have been in United States schools 7+ years, are orally fluent in English, write below their respective grade level, and have low literacy in the home language, if any.

Although the findings were contextually bound, these texts were very helpful to begin to understand the subgroup. However, they had limitations, as the findings were contextually bound and not able to achieve high levels of reliability due to the qualitative nature of the studies. The texts also lacked methodological details which would have been helpful for the reader to better understand the results. For example, Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) claim that the programs implemented in the texts were highly effective as participating students and schools demonstrated: "stronger and more rapid English language development, smoother and better transitions through school and greater preparation for higher preparation for higher education, and significant improvements in access to curriculum at all schools" (p. 27), but they do not offer strong evidence beyond student and teacher anecdotes to support this claim. Similarly, Freeman and Freeman's work (2002) does not offer quantitative evidence or a thorough discussion of the methodology that would be helpful to evaluate their claims. This limitation is due to the qualitative nature of the study; nevertheless, including qualitative methodological details would have provided a better understanding of how the data were analyzed and given support to the authors' claims for the effectiveness of their claims.

LTELL proficiency scholarship: Policy guides

Olsen and Jaramillo's (1999) work provided the basis for Olsen's later (2010b, 2012) seminal and influential policy guides on LTELLs. Olsen's (2010b) policy and research executive summary for the non-profit group, California Tomorrow, sought to make LTELLs more visible to educators and policy makers and begin to address the unique proficiency needs of this growing subgroup of ELLs in California's schools. This report was warranted as California was experiencing explosive growth in the population of LTELLs. The majority, or 59%, of all ELLs in California's secondary schools are LTELLs and California has the largest percentage of ELLs in the nation (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). In this work, Olsen argues that the state is both legally responsible and morally obligated to provide language access and educational opportunity for LTELLs. Olsen bases this argument in part on the mandates established from both NCLB (2002) and the *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court 1974 decision [9].

Olsen recommends four change proposals to support LTELLs: create a standard definition for LTELLs, create mechanisms to assess students at risk of protracted status, program LTELLs into clusters within mainstream content classes, and create a specialized ELP class to address the academic language gaps which are impediments to LTELL students' ELP success (2010b).

Olsen's (2010b) research is based on survey data from over 175,000 secondary ELL students across 40 school districts in California. This study was unique in that it was the first study to influence state policy for LTELLs in any state. Following Olsen's recommendations, California became the first state in the nation to both require that the state identify and agree on a statewide definition for LTELLs. As a result of the report, forums were convened across California to better understand the needs of these students. These forums were well attended by teachers and administrators across California. Olsen's (2010b) report was influential and caused policy change. However, perhaps due to the nature of the study, it lacked important methodological details such as how the data were collected and/or analyzed that would be helpful in evaluating the emergent trends presented from the survey data. Despite these shortcomings, Olsen's (2010b) work had a substantial impact on the field of LTELL scholarship in that it helped to raise visibility for this subgroup of ELLs and create more discourse and awareness of their needs.

Proficiency scholarship: LTELL as bilingual learners

Contemporaneously to Olsen, a few scholars in states with large populations of LTELLs, including New York, California, Arizona and Texas reported on the proficiency dimension of LTELLs. From this small group of scholars, Kate Menken emerged from the group as a leader in the field of LTELL research, producing an impressive body of work on the literacy and linguistic practices of LTELLs in New York City. Menken argues that LTELLs are emergent bilinguals and as such, should receive bilingual educational opportunities. There is abundant and well-established research which is clear on the benefits of bilingual education for ELLs (Cummins, 1981, 1984). However, paradoxically, bilingual educational programs have been diminished and extinguished from the K-12 curriculum in many states (Ovando & Combs, 2018). Menken's argument affirms earlier scholarship on ELLs and extends this perspective to the LTELL subgroup. Menken's seminal works include two qualitative descriptive studies which were part of a larger mixed method research project. Menken's pioneering works, Menken and Kleyn (2010) and Menken, Kleyn and Chae (2012) are reviewed below.

Menken and Kleyn's (2010) qualitative study was conducted in three New York City high

schools with large populations of LTELLs. In this study, Menken analyzed interview data from 29 LTELLs, five school administrators, and four teachers of LTELLs. These semi-structured interviews were coded for emergent themes and triangulated with descriptive data including school transcripts, report cards, state test scores, and home language identification surveys. Menken found that LTELLs have strong oral proficiency for social purposes in both English and their native language and overwhelmingly prefer to communicate by speaking, mostly in English over their native languages as this is what is most often used in the school context. Menken and Kleyn's work suggest that while LTELLs have strong oral proficiency, they face severe challenges in academic literacy and English language development (ELD). Menken and Kleyn point out that this creates a paradox between students' linguistic preference and their strong capacity to communicate orally in English; and their inability to communicate in the academic context [10]. Menken and Kleyn's (2010) research suggest that LTELLs are unable to bridge their linguistic skills from the social to the academic registers necessary for success in school.

LTELLs' ELP and academic performance

Menken, Kleyn and Chae's (2012) descriptive, qualitative study investigated the academic and social characteristics of LTELLs in three large New York City high schools with LTELLs. Menken's methodology includes in-depth interviews with LTELL students and educators of LTELLs as well as a document analysis of academic performance derived from school records. In regard to overall academic performance, the study suggests that study participants had very low cumulative grade point averages of 69.2% or D+ for all students in the study (n=29) and some students in the sample were failing with F averages (6 of 29). Students in the study sample were also several grade levels behind in both Spanish and English (three years in English and 3.5 in Spanish). Participating students reported that despite their low actual performance, they felt they were doing well in school. This is exemplified in the following quote from one study participant (Menken & Kleyn, 2012), "the only two classes that I'm failing is math and English, but other than that I think I'm really doing good" (p.134). This quote illustrates the disconnect between students' actual performance and students' self-perceptions of their performance. Other scholars such as Freeman and Freeman (2002), have suggested that sustained low academic performance can contribute to an inaccurate self-perception of academic performance. There are dire consequences for students who perform inadequately in school as poor academic performance increases the chance of grade retention and eventually dropping out of school. For ELLs, the stakes are high, as they are known to have the highest dropout rate of all subgroups in New York City (New York City Demographic Report, 2016) [11] and there is a well-documented correlation between grade retention and an increase in the likelihood of eventual dropout (Callahan, 2005, 2013; Klein, 2016; Roderick, 1994). Menken and Kleyn's (2012) work significantly enhanced the field of scholarship on LTELLs by offering valuable first hand, emic perspectives from students on their language preferences and their experience of school. This work is unique in that it includes extended direct quotes from students on their experience of schooling. Due to the nature of the study, there are limitations such as a small sample size and lack of quantitative data. More research is warranted in the area of LTELL proficiency which include studies with larger sample sizes and pilot programs which test the effectiveness and efficacy of the reports' recommendations for instruction and curricula. The table below summarizes common proficiency characteristics of LTELLs. All LOA agents, the

learner, peers, and teacher interact and have potential impact on these proficiency characteristics.

Table 1. LOA Dimension in the LTELL Population: Proficiency Characteristics

Proficiency characteristics	Scholar(s)
• Frequently co-switch between L1 and L2, depending on context	Menken & Kleyn, 2010
• Underdeveloped academic performance and overall academic deficits	Brooks, 2015; Flores, Kleyn & Menken, 2015; Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2012; Olvera, 2015
• Inaccurate self-perceptions of actual proficiency and academic performance	Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Menken & Kleyn, 2012
• Difficulties with academic language and communicating in the academic context and strong oral proficiency	Menken & Kleyn, 2010
• Difficulty bridging their linguistic skills from the social to the academic registers	Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Menken, Kleyn & Chae, 2012
• Are emergent bilinguals and need to develop both L1 and L2 proficiencies	Menken & Kleyn, 2010; Menken, Kleyn & Chae, 2012

Instructional Dimension for LTELLs

The present section will review and critique what has been reported in the literature for the LOA instructional dimension of LTELLs. This instructional dimension is undergirded by the classroom teacher's knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) in understanding and delivering both pedagogical content and topical content knowledge (Turner & Purpura, 2015). In the case of teachers of LTELLs, teachers must possess a range of KSAs in both language and content topical knowledge as well as the pedagogical ability necessary to effectively impart language and content to students. This instructional dimension is critical for LTELL students' ultimate success as they process the language and content planned, instructed and assessed by the teacher. The classroom teacher's instructional and pedagogical knowledge have been shown to be strong predictors of a students' ultimate success in both language and content mastery (Lange, Kleickmann, & Möller, 2012). The section will begin with a review of empirical studies on instructional practices with secondary LTELLs and conclude with a review of curricular guides and resources which present instructional strategies which are known to support LTELLs. An understanding of previous scholarship will give the reader a better understanding of the instructional domain for LTELLs and the instructional practices which have potential beneficence for LTELLs' literacy and language development.

Instructional dimension: Experimental research on instruction of LTELLs

Menken et al.'s (2010) pioneering work was an experimental, mixed-method study on LTELLs and was the second phase of a two-part multi-year study conducted in New York City high schools. Based upon the findings from phase 1, Menken designed and implemented a pilot intervention program in two high schools that serve a small Spanish speaking group of LTELLs. A third high school was included in the study as a control school. The final study sample included 13 students in school one, 15 in school two, and 14 in school three (n= 42). Menken et al. notes that these students represented a minority of the school population and thus their needs were tangential to the overall goals of the school. Prior to this pilot study, these schools offered no specialized courses and no instructional differentiation had been done to support LTELLs. Over the course of one year, study participants took specialized courses in the following three areas: Spanish Native Language Arts (NLA) courses designed to develop and support both NLA and English proficiencies; separate ESL courses for only LTELLs which focused on academic language and literacies rather than more traditional ELD courses; and content area courses which emphasize learning both language and content simultaneously. Professional development was a critical part of the study and participating teachers received regular ongoing professional development. This professional development helped the researchers more effectively monitor study implementation and teachers make necessary adjustments to their practice and curricula.

Menken and the research team collected five points of qualitative data: classroom observations, student interviews, student focus groups, teacher interviews and administrator interviews. Quantitative data was collected from two points: participants' pre and post test scores on the Academic Language and Literacy Diagnostic (ALLD) and the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) [12]. Data were analyzed and compared against the control school's participants using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Overall, Menken et al.'s (2010) findings showed promising results under certain conditions in treatment schools. Menken's quantitative findings showed statistically significant gains on certain measures of ANOVA and HLM analyses in participants' scores on the ALLD in both Spanish and English and on the NYSESLAT in comparison to the control school. On the ALLD assessment, students gained approximately one grade level of growth over the school year while students in the control school did worse and experienced a decrease of about a grade level. Similarly, Menken's qualitative findings had positive results with increases in teachers' engagement, preparedness, and ability to problem solve [13]. Menken et al. (2010) conclude that the biliteracy pilot program worked well to develop LTELL students' literacy in Spanish and English especially under certain instructional conditions. Using these findings as evidence, Menken et al. argue that LTELL students have experienced "consistent subtractive schooling" (p. 61) which have resulted in limited academic literacy skills. Menken et al. advocate for schools to embrace LTELL students' native languages by offering biliteracy programming embedded in all content areas classes which fully accepts and acknowledges the heterogeneity within the LTELL population.

Menken et al.'s (2010) study concludes with three instructional and programming recommendations: more bilingual educational opportunities for LTELLs; clear, consistent and cohesive language programs; and explicit academic language instruction in secondary schools for LTELLs. The authors advocate for establishing cohesive and consistent language routines starting with identifying LTELLs during intake and then providing them with instruction and

curricula that are rigorous and developmentally appropriate. To support initial identification of LTELLs, the authors created a student interview questionnaire template to be used during intake to help schools identify LTELLs [14]. Menken et al.'s study was unique in that it is the first and only known example by the present author of experimental research conducted with LTELLs. Due to the promising results, further research is warranted in different contexts and with larger sample sizes which investigate the effectiveness of biliteracy programs on LTELL students.

Instructional dimension: Curricular guides for LTELLs

While there is abundant empirical research which discuss the effective instructional and pedagogical techniques for ELLs (e.g. Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006; Maxwell-Jolly, Gándara, & Méndez Benavídez, 2007), there have been scant scholarship which provides research-based recommendations for ELL subgroups, including LTELLs. Two such works by Ascenzi-Moreno, Kleyn, and Menken (2013) and Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2013) have addressed this gap and responded to the growing demand from the field for instructional guides for LTELLs. Ascenzi-Moreno, Kleyn, and Menken's (2013) instructional guide provides a LTELL framework and curriculum including recommendations for teachers, administrators, teacher educators and other stakeholders who work with LTELLs. This framework was based on Menken's earlier qualitative studies investigating the services LTELLs are receiving and the literacy needs of the group (Menken et al. 2010; Menken, & Kleyn, 2010). This instructional guide is anchored by two key principles which the authors believe are non-negotiable and fundamental to creating a successful and supportive environment for LTELLs and other emergent bilingual students: the use of students' bilingualism as a resource in their education by intentionally building on students' home language practices, and providing students with an instructional and school context which makes their home languages and literacy practices valued and visible. Although these principles are well established in the research (Cummins 1980, 1981; Kim & García, 2014), ELLs are not regularly enrolled in and there is a dearth of high-quality bilingual education programs.

Ascenzi-Moreno, Kleyn, and Menken (2013) recommend program, curricular, pedagogical, and assessment strategies for LTELLs. Within the instructional domain, the authors describe seven aspects they found have a positive impact on LTELLs: the use of translanguaging strategies, building from students' current linguistic practices, activating prior knowledge, explicit teaching of vocabulary and language, teaching language within content and use of shared readings to deconstruct text. Interestingly, while shared reading has been shown to have a positive impact on the reading practices and achievement of both LTELL and ELLs in general; (Calderón, Slavin & Sánchez, 2010), it has been found to be one of the least commonly used techniques (Brooks, 2015). Brooks' (2015) study on LTELL reading practices was based on classroom observations and interview data collected in a large high school in Los Angeles. Brooks found that during shared readings, teachers often do most of the work by providing an official interpretation of the text. This counterfeit shared reading technique leaves little room for the students to think critically about texts while co-constructing meaning during interpretation.

Ascenzi-Moreno, Kleyn, and Menken's (2013) report is concise and the findings are presented in tables and bullets. The findings are potentially helpful for stakeholders who wish to develop an understanding of instructional techniques which are helpful for LTELLs. While the report is a valuable contribution to the growing field of scholarship on the instructional dimension of

LTELLs, two salient limitations are evident. The authors provide agreeable recommendations for instruction, such as present grade level content and use creative means to give students access to vocabulary words in ways that go beyond looking up and reciting definitions; however, there is little discussion as to how this should be accomplished nor a discussion of the research base which supports these suggestions. The authors have developed an excellent curricular guide but left out the critical discussion as to how to accomplish the suggested instructional changes. Research from Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2013) partially addressed this gap with specific recommendations on pedagogical strategies for teachers and program recommendations for administrations who work with LTELLs.

Calderón and Minaya-Rowe's (2013) text is focused on components of school improvement related to three areas of school change which have shown to lead to academic gains for LTELLs: school structure, teacher support mechanisms, and effective instruction (Calderón, Slavin & Sánchez, 2010; Lesaux, Geva, Keiko, Siegal, & Shanahan, 2006). The text is designed for teachers who work with LTELLs as both an instructional guidebook and mentor text for study groups. Calderón and Minaya-Rowe's work recommends extensive teacher professional development and places an emphasis on vocabulary development across content areas specifically by teaching tiered words. Organizing and teaching vocabulary into tiers or levels is known to be an effective means of supporting academic language for both ELLs and non-ELLs' academic language development (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Dutro & Moran, 2003). Calderón and Minaya-Rowe posit other instructional suggestions to support LTELLs including using genre-based pedagogical strategies and suggestions for cooperative learning activities to engage LTELL students. The text describes some instructional strategies that are known to be helpful for LTELLs but lacks a thorough discussion of why these strategies are effective. More research is justified in this area which investigates teachers' instructional strategies and their impact on LTELL students' academic performance. The table below summarizes the instructional dimension for LTELLs and also lists the instructional and pedagogical techniques which support LTELLs' ELP development.

Table 2. LOA Dimension in the LTELL Population: Instructional Factors

Instructional factors	Scholar(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular and ongoing professional development for teachers of LTELLs 	Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2013; Menken et al., 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Separate ESL courses for LTELLs specializing in academic language, content area biliteracy programs in NL and target language to support literacy and ELP development 	Ascenzi-Moreno, Kleyn, & Menken, 2013; Menken et al., 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create instruction which values and celebrates LTELL's home languages and literacy practices, translanguaging strategies 	Ascenzi-Moreno, Kleyn, & Menken, 2013; Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activating prior knowledge, explicit teaching of vocabulary, teaching language within content and use of shared readings to deconstruct text, present grade level content, genre-based writing 	Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2013

Affective Dimension of LTELLs

The present section will review and critique what has been reported in the literature for the LOA affective dimension of LTELLs. According to Turner and Purpura (2015), the affective dimension describes “learners’ socio-psychological predispositions to how learners experience and engage in the assessment process” (p. 268). This affective dimension is related to how students’ self-perceptions, beliefs about their schooling, and academic competence affect performance. There is scant research which investigates the affective domain of LTELLs and the impact learners’ self-perceptions have on academic achievement. Kim and García (2014) is the only known study to the present author’s knowledge which investigates learners’ self-perceptions and the affective domain. This section will review this empirical study. An understanding of this research will give the reader a better understanding of the affective domain for LTELLs.

Kim and García’s (2014) study investigated LTELL students’ self-perceptions of their language and academic learning experiences with a group of 13 LTELL students enrolled in a high school located in a metropolitan area in Texas. Over the course of an academic school year, the researchers collected data from semi-structured interviews and an ex post facto analysis of school records. The researchers used grounded theory to code interview data for emergent themes. These data were triangulated with available descriptive data including school records (e.g. retention history, course schedules, academic and language assessment scores). Kim and García’s analysis of school records revealed that study participants had a continuous record of academic failure, grade retention, and insufficiently developed ELP. Kim and García found that study participants received inconsistent language support services during elementary and middle school and many participants (7 of 13) received no direct language support at all.

Kim and García’s interview data revealed two themes related to the LOA affective domain: LTELL students perceived themselves as motivated and active learners with an aspiration to attend college and described their learning experiences as difficult and challenging but positive. This finding was similar to Menken, Klyen and Chae’s (2012) work which suggests that LTELLs perceive themselves as motivated, successful, and active learners who are challenged by school but remain confident that they can overcome poor academic performance. Kim and García’s study participants felt they had agency in their academic development and that they could self-advocate to achieve their educational goals. These perceptions are in contrast to educational research which positions LTELLs and ELLs in general as undermotivated and without agency (Jacobs, 2008).

Kim and García’s study participants’ self-perceptions present a discrepancy with the reality of their poor academic performance and actual readiness for college. Kim and García note that this disconnect raises questions as to how educators, counselors, and other advisors of LTELLs can help offer more effective programming with coherent and continuous language support services that are level-appropriate and provide relevant academic advisement that supports the college admission process. Despite study limitations, such as the small sample size and the contextually bound findings, Kim and García’s work is a valuable contribution to the field as it offers insight to an area of limited research regarding LTELLs’ self-perceptions. More empirical research is warranted for longitudinal studies which explore to what extent LTELL students’ perceptions impact academic performance and for what ESL supports have a positive

impact on LTELLs academic performance. The table below summarizes scholarship on the affective dimension for LTELLs.

Table 3. LOA Dimension in the LTELL Population: Affective Factors

Affective factors	Scholar(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-motivated and able to self-advocate, confident, active learners 	Kim & García, 2014; Menken, Klyen & Chae, 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceive themselves as successful learners despite challenges of school and actual poor academic performance. 	Kim & García, 2014

Conclusion: Implications for future research

The current review provided an overview, classified, synthesized and evaluated research on LTELLs in the proficiency, instructional and affective domains of LOA. This review demonstrated how the research field has begun to investigate the diverse subgroups of ESL students, including LTELLs. This is a welcome development for teachers and other stakeholders who work with LTELL students. Scholarship on LTELLs is a relatively nascent field that has grown in the past decade. While preparing the current review, in an EBSCO search, the author discovered nine dissertation studies on LTELLs in the last two years alone. This increase in research is a promising development and has the potential to advance the field of scholarship on what is known about the LOA domains of LTELLs. The present review showed some of the many strengths in the field of scholarship and how this research is currently being applied in select contexts. LTELL scholars have found the benefits of bilingual education, direct academic language instruction, cohesive and consistent language programming, and access to grade level content as means to positively impact LTELL students' language and literacy proficiencies. The present work also highlighted some of the gaps in the research field including the dearth of experiential studies, the lack of research on the early schooling practices of LTELLs, and the lack of longitudinal studies with large sample sizes in varied contexts. More research is warranted in these areas and could potentially improve learning outcomes for LTELLs. There are other areas from the LOA Framework which are overdue for investigation, including the socio-cognitive, contextual, elicitation, learning, and interactional domains. Additional research in these LOA dimensions would provide a better understanding of the learning processes of LTELLs and thus assist stakeholders to be optimally prepared to support the unique needs of this population.

Notes

[1] Recent scholarship refers to English Language Learners in a variety of terms including Linguistic or Language Minority Students or Emergent Bilingual Students (Menken & Kleyn,

2010). For the current review, I have chosen to use the term English Language Learners as it is the widely adopted term in the field of K-12 TESOL. [\[back\]](#)

[2] Subgroup designation varies across states. For example, according to the New York City Demographic Report (2016), there are five officially designated ELL subgroups in New York State: New Comer, Developing, Long Term, SIFE, and ELLs with Disabilities. [\[back\]](#)

[3] These students are also sometimes known as “ESL Lifers,” “The 1.5 generation,” “Forever LEP,” and “The 6 Plusers” (Olsen, 2010b). [\[back\]](#)

[4] Some scholars have pointed out that the LTELL label is problematic and connotes a deficit view of the learner (Flores, Kleyn & Menken, 2015). For the present review, I have chosen to use the term as it the most widely adopted term in the field of K-12 TESOL. [\[back\]](#)

[5] This number is inclusive of the year students are enrolled. [\[back\]](#)

[6] In the present work, I use the term literacy following Short and Fitzsimmon’s (2007) definition to mean the cross-content reading, writing, and oral discourses required for school. [\[back\]](#)

[7] While improvements were made post NCLB, inconsistencies and variance both within and across states remained as states still use different ELP tests and have different levels that students must meet to be reclassified (Kim, 2011). [\[back\]](#)

[8] All states use ELP tests as the primary but not sole criterion for classification of ELLs. Many states use a variety of data in classification decisions including a combination of district and other content area tests. These inconsistent classification practices further exacerbate the problem with variance across states, creating ambiguity and making comparing state classification data difficult (Kim 2011; Kim & Herman, 2012). [\[back\]](#)

[9] In *Lau v. Nicholas*, the Supreme Court wrote that “Any system employed to deal with the special language skills needs of national origin minority group children must be designated to meet such language skills needs as soon as possible and must not operate as an educational dead-end or permanent track” (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). [\[back\]](#)

[10] Menken and Kleyn (2010) note that students’ linguistic choice is bound by context. 90% of the study participants spoke Spanish natively and indicated that they often code-switch between English and Spanish when speaking. Menken notes that the decision of when to code switch was situationally based. Other scholars such as Baker (2006) have also found that linguistic choice is bound by context. [\[back\]](#)

[11] No data on dropout rates for LTELLs or other ELL subgroups are available in New York or nationally. This is an area in need of future research. [\[back\]](#)

[12] The NYSESLAT is the mandated NYS language proficiency tests for all ELLs in NYS. This test is given annually and determines ELL’s official proficiency level and if the student exits ELL status. [\[back\]](#)

[13] These qualitative measures were quantified in rankings of criteria of teacher effort and effectiveness on a scale of 0 to 1 at quarter-point intervals collected during classroom observations. [\[back\]](#)

[14] Following Menken et al. (2010), New York State recommended that schools collect intake data on LTELLs including prior schooling and language instruction. According to the present

author's anecdotal evidence, many schools in NYC now use this questionnaire during the intake process. [[back](#)]

[15] This LTELL framework defines LTELLs as emergent bilingual students. The LTELL framework is part of a larger research project sponsored by CUNY and the New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals. For more information on the CUNY-NYSIEB research project visit: <https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/>. [[back](#)]

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